How to Better Serve LGB and T Older Adults: Is Your Practice LGBT Welcoming?

Marsha Berry, MA, CAEd

info@trainingtoserve.org
http://www.trainingtoserve.org
What We’ll Cover

- Key Terms
- Facts and Figures
- LGBT History
- Best Practices
- Training & Resources
Key Terms

• LGBT
• Lesbian
• Gay
• Bisexual
• Transgender
Transgender

- People whose gender identity differs from the gender assigned at birth.

- **Transwoman**
  - Born Male,
  - Live as Female

- **Transman**
  - Born Female,
  - Live as Male

- Cisgender
Terms to Avoid

• Homosexual
• Queer
• Lifestyle
• Sexual Preference
How many LGBT 60+?

2.8 million
Services & Housing

• Most LGBT seniors prefer fully integrated services and housing

• Increasing number of LGBT seniors living openly, many with spouses and partners

• Handful of residential communities cater to older LGBT adults
Edith Windsor, b. 1930

• 1954. McCarthy Trials target “sexual perverts” for harassment and termination from government jobs.
  Edith is 24

• 1969. Stonewall Riots begin the gay rights movement.
  Edith is 39

• 1973. APA removes homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.
  Edith is 43
Edith Windsor

- 1997. Ellen DeGeneres comes out publicly as a lesbian. **Edith is 67**

- 2007. Edith marries Thea Spyer, her partner of 43 years, in Ontario Canada. **Edith is 77**

- 2013. United States v. Windsor struck down section three of the Defense of Marriage Act. **Edith is 83**
Impact of LGBT History

• Hesitant or fearful to disclose LGBT id

• Afraid of abuse or substandard care

• Rely on families of choice/friends for care
Vertical Caregiving

- Older Adult
- Adult Child
- Grandchildren
Horizontal Caregiving
Isolation

• Live Alone (1.5X)

• No Children (4X)

• No Caregiver (2X)
Beliefs About Long Term Care

- 89% staff would discriminate
- 81% peers would discriminate
- 77% peers would isolate
- 53% staff would abuse
Reluctance to Access Services

• LGBT elders are 5 times less likely to access social services than larger population
• Tend to wait for crises
• Feel need to return to closet
• Assume straight & cis gendered
Scenarios
Merrilee Weathers is a short-term resident at the convalescent center you manage. She is a male-to-female transgendered person who has not had sex reassignment surgery. What do you tell the staff members who will be assisting her with baths and other personal hygiene activities? And at the moment, all your single rooms are taken, so she will need to share a room with another resident. Will you place her with a male or female roommate? And what, if anything, do you tell her roommate?
• A lesbian is convalescing at the care center that you manage. Her partner comes to visit regularly. They are openly affectionate with each other. The staff, the other residents, and their guests complain about their behavior. What do you do?
Bullying in the dining room?
What Can You Do?
What Can You Do?

We do not discriminate on the basis of:
Age
Race
Sex
Religion
National Origin
Language
Education
Marital Status
Sexual Orientation
Gender Identity
HIV Status or
Disability
Best Practices

• Incorporate questions related to gender id and sexual orientation into your resident/client/participant orientation process

• Include pictures of LGBT older adults in advertising materials and on your web site.
Best Practices

• Provide and honor active inclusion programs and events, and holidays within your organizations, not just for your residents/clients/participants, but also for your staff.
SAFE ZONE

This space RESPECTS all aspects of people including race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, age, religion, body shape, size and ability.

Adapted from Boulder County, CO Public Health
10 Things You Can Do

• Include articles on LGBT topics or clients in your newsletter

• Make LGBT resources such as the *LGBT Aging Resource Guide* available to your clients and families

• Update assessments and forms to include LGBT welcoming language relating to sexual orientation and gender identity

• Include visible anti-discrimination statements on materials or in your office

• Train staff on LGBT aging sensitivity
10 Things You Can Do (cont.)

• Use same-sex couples or transgender clients in marketing materials
10 Things You Can Do (cont.)

• Use same-sex couples or transgender clients in marketing materials

• Advertise or list your organization in publications used by the LGBT community – this includes employee recruitment

• Create materials from your organization specifically for LGBT clients and families

• Hang rainbow or inclusive/safe space signs in public areas

• Sponsor LGBT community events to increase visibility within the LGBT community
Are you in the *Guide*?

- http://www.trainingtoserve.org/lgbt-aging-resources-guide /
Contact Information

Training to Serve

www.trainingtoserve.org

Marsha Berry

mberry@alz.org